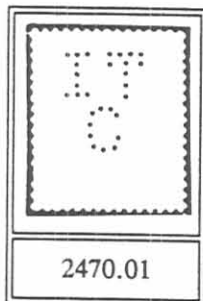
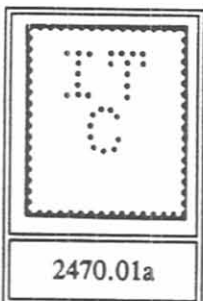


William S. Shields (#2951)

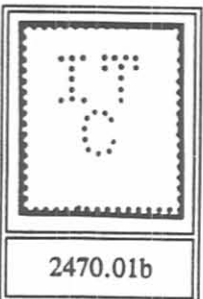
The following three IT/C perfin were produced by POKO affixing machines used by The Imperial Tobacco Co (of Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd, Bristol 2. The differences are subtle but the pins forming the foot of the 'I' can be used to differentiate one machine from another. The last illustration shows the product of the Dublin machine.



In use: 1929-1945.  
 Dates: 3 Aug 1929.  
 Issues: I(BC) ½d, 1½d L 1½d  
 M ½d, 1½d, 2d O ½d  
 Q ½d-1½d, 6d R 1d  
 Note: Standard alphabet POKO.  
 First machine - pins forming foot of 'I' in line and horizontal.



In use: 1935-1952.  
 Dates: 5 Jan 1945.  
 Issues: M ½d, 1½d O ½d  
 Q ½d-1½d, 2½d, 6d  
 R ½d, 1d, 2½d S 2½d  
 Note: Standard alphabet POKO.  
 Second machine - leftmost pin in foot of 'I' positioned slightly low.



In use: 1935-1952.  
 Dates:  
 Issues: M 1½d Q 1½d-2½d  
 R 2½d S 2½d  
 Note: Standard alphabet POKO.  
 Third machine - both pins forming the foot of the 'I' positioned low. Larger holes after c1940.

Figure 1.

Figure 1 is taken from page I-103 of *The Perfin Society's New Illustrated Catalog of Great British Perfins*, edited by Roy Gault.

I placed an inquiry in the November/December issue of *The Perfins Bulletin* ("Imperial Tobacco Company, p.180) concerning the Imperial Tobacco Company. The intent was to find an IT/C (*Ireland: Catalog of Perfins*, 2nd. ed., 1994, The Perfins Club, Mewhinney) punch on any Irish stamp other than the ½d "Sword of Light", *Scott Catalogue* number 65 (see Figure 1). In addition, I was looking for examples of this pattern on stamps of Great Britain. In retrospect, the latter question was poorly phrased. The question should have been, "Does this pattern exist on a stamp of Great Britain used in Ireland?"

I was swamped with responses. I consider myself a "new member" and found this cooperation really great. Some members sent free perfins, computer listings, photocopies of their GB IT/C perfins, numerous lists, and the finest and kindly letters imaginable.

I became interested in this perfin after going through hundreds of Irish perfins and observing that the IT/C pattern only appeared on the ½d Sword of Light stamp. This stamp is part of a series that is the longest running definitive series in the world.

The 2d Map stamp came out in 1922, the rest of the set including the ½d stamp in 1923. The set was only changed three times prior to finally being replaced in 1968. In 1940 the watermark was changed from SE to E (i.e., *Scott Catalogue* watermarks 44 and 262). The second change was in 1949 when 8d and 11d values were added. In 1966-67 the 3d and 5d stamps were produced by rotogravure. In addition, the 2d and 3d values were overprinted in

April of 1941, in memory of the Rebellion of 1916. However, the IT/C punch has only been found on ½d stamps with the SE watermark. a stamp that was in used for 18 years.

During the period 1922-1940 there were numerous postal rate changes, but the ½p rate covered inland mail for postal or trade cards and some special items (e.g., printed papers, literature for the blind - braille). While some collector probably has the perfin on a trade or postal card none were reported to me. Roy Gault (#3000), The Perfins Society Catalog Editor, provided the most details concerning the history of the Imperial Tobacco Company.

At the turn of the century an American, James Duke, set his sights on the British tobacco market. In September 1901, he purchased Ogden's cigarette and tobacco factory in Liverpool, England. To counter this threat, thirteen British cigarette and tobacco companies merged their resources to compete against James Duke's "American Tobacco Company" and so the "Imperial Tobacco Company" was founded November 2, 1901. The feud was settled one year when it was agreed that the American Tobacco Company would concentrate on the American and Cuban markets, while the Imperial Tobacco Company would handel the British market (which at that time included all of Ireland). A third company was set up on September 29, 1902 to deal specifically with the export interests of both the ATC and ITC.

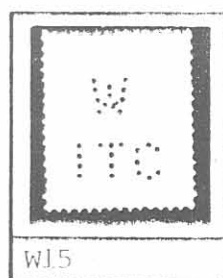


Figure 2.

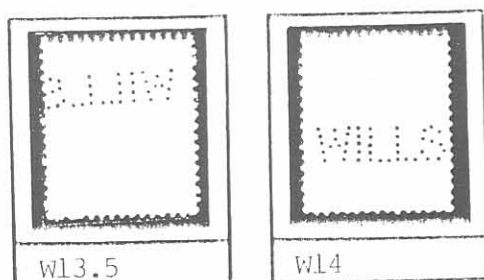
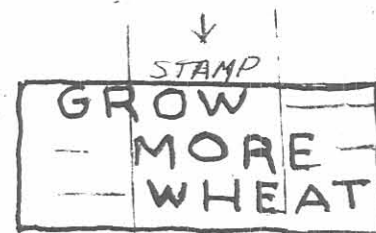


Figure 3.

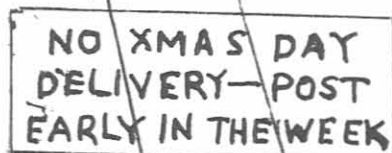
One of the founding members of the Imperial Tobacco Company was W.D. & H.O. Wills with their huge factory in Bristol, England. As Wills was the largest of the 13 founding companies it was natural that it would become the main offices for ITC. I do not know when the name changed to "The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd." or who the Irish tobacco company was. Mewhinney lists a pattern for Wills Imperial Tobacco Company, W/ITC (W15 - Figure 2) and two patterns that spell out the Wills name (W13.5 and W14 - Figure 3). Pattern W13.5 is listed by Mewhinney with Belfast postmarks. Mewhinney lists "W.D. & H.O. Wills & WM. Clark & Sons as the user of W14 (*Ireland: Catalog of Perfins*, 2nd edition, Richard L. Mewhinney, Compiler and Editor, The Perfins Club, 1994, pp. 34-5). I have seen both "WILLS" patterns on stamps of various denominations with various cancels. I know of at least one British firm that used as many as five different perfin patterns, so it is not unreasonable to think that all four patterns (i.e., ITC, W/TC, and both WILLS) were used by the same company; however, I am unable to prove this conjecture.

According to Roy Gault, the only known date cancel on an Irish stamp with the IT/C pattern is a very clean example showing 11 November 1938. *The Perfin Society's New Illustrated Catalog of Great British Perfins: Section I*, 1995, Roy Gault, lists three British and one Irish version of the IT/C perfin. The British version are shown at Figure 1 and the Irish perfin is at Figure 6. I have never seen a date cancel on a stamp with the IT/C perfin; however, I have numerous stamps with partial slogan cancels. Through use of *Irish Slogan Postmarks 1918-1983*, James A. Mackay, it is fairly simple to match the slogan with the date of usage. Examples of matching two slogan cancels are provided as figures 4 and 5.



Slogan #34  
First Used 1933  
Dublin 'B', Cork, Limerick

Figure 4.



Slogan #50  
First Used 1937  
Dublin "C" Cancel

Figure 5.

Figure 4, "Grow More Wheat" was first used in 1933 with Dublin B, Cork and Limerick postmarks. Figure 5, "No Xmas Day Delivery-Post Early in the Week" was first used in 1937 with a Dublin C postmark only. That is to say, the only common city of usage for these two slogan cancels was Dublin. These slogan cancels were used for a number of years before being discontinued. The "Grow More Wheat" device was used into the 1940's and the other slogan was discontinued in 1939. Given these data, we might assume that while perfin pattern IT/C may have been used on Irish stamps earlier than November 11, 1938, and I have no positive proof of such usage and must rely on Gault's reported usage of 1935-40.

The IT/C pattern has not been reported on a stamp of Great Britain canceled in Ireland meaning that the Imperial Tobacco Company did not have any offices in the six Northern Ireland Counties or the twenty-six counties of the Republic. The British POKO patterns of Figure 6 (see page 130) are attributed to The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd., Bristol, England. In fact, the Irish IT/C perfin is found only on the ½p. Sword of Light stamp, it could not have been used as a single to mail letters, or parcels except in combination with other postage. The pattern is unknown in strips or multiples. On the other hand, the British IT/C perfins are found on numerous stamps of various denominations. It would thus appear that the main shipments of letters and parcels were shipped from the company's Bristol office.

Whilst conducting my research, I wrote to the Postal Archives in Great Britain concerning the location of an Imperial Tobacco Company in Ireland. Their response was that they had found no record of an Imperial Tobacco Company office in Ireland. I have therefore concluded that the ½d stamps must have been purchased in large quantities and these were delivered to Imperial Tobacco's

offices in Bristol where the stamps were made-up into strips. The made-up strips were then placed in the POKO machine where the stamps were punched and cut before being applied to the trade or postal cards.

The postal or trade cards were then shipped in bulk to Dublin where they were delivered to the G.P.O. in Dublin for posting in the Irish mails. This might have done by mail or by rail shipment from Bristol to Holyhead where the bulk lots could be transferred to the ferry crossing the Irish Sea to Dublin. Why go to all this trouble to mail post or trade cards as advertising? The reason was the considerable savings in postage. The rate for such material from England to Ireland was 1d. The inland Irish rate was ½d. Over the long period of usage, the savings would have been considerable.

Several other possible locations have been suggested for the location of the IT/C device. These include: Boundry Lane, Liverpool 6; Dingley Road EC1; 51 Islington Park Street N1; and PO Box 78A, Liverpool L69 1DT. Should the POKO machine for the Irish perfins been located in Liverpool, it would have been a simple matter to apply the perfins and ferry the bulk mail from Liverpool to Carrickfergus. The parcel would then be put on the night train in Belfast to arrive at the G.P.O., Dublin within a day.

While the POKO machine for the Irish perfins might have been used by an agent of the company located in Dublin, I believe that the Irish perfin was placed on cards in Great Britain at one of Imperial Tobacco's many factories and then shipped in bulk to Dublin where the cards entered the mail stream.

I find the Irish IT/C punch to be very unusual in that:

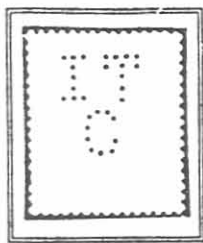
- o Only one denomination was used.
- o No company address is to be found in the Republic or the Northern Counties.
- o No strips or multiples are known.
- o No perfins are known on trade or post card.

Notes: My special thanks to Gerald E. Soutar (LM68) and Roy Gault (#3000) for their assistance.

The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd.

Die in use 1930-1940.

This is the original POKO die and can be easily identified as the pins forming the foot of the 'T' are in line and horizontal.



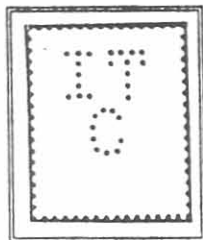
Issues: I ½d 1½d M ½d 1½d 2d  
O ½d  
Q 1d 1½d 6d

I = KGV *Typographed* 1911-1934  
M = KGV *Photogravure* 1934-1936  
O = KEVIII *Issue* 1936  
Q = KGV *Dark Colours* 1937-1953

Die in use 1935-1945.

A second die has the *leftmost* pin in foot of the 'T' positioned slightly low giving a lob-sided look to the base.

Postmarks/Dates: Bristol, 5 Jan 1945.



Issues: M 1½d O ½d  
Q ½d 1½d 2½d R ½d 2½d

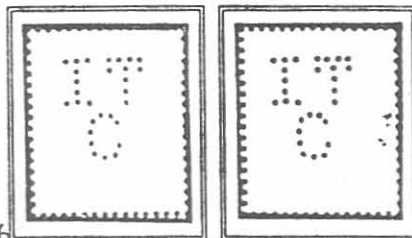
M = KGV *Photogravure* 1934-1936  
Q = KGV *Dark Colours* 1937-1953  
R = KGV *Light Colours* 1941-1953  
O = KEVIII *Issue* 1936

Die in use 1935-1960.

The third die has *both* outside pins in the foot of the 'T' positioned low.

Issues: M 2½d Q 1½d 2½d

M = KGV *Photogravure* 1934-36  
Q = KGV *Dark Colours* 1937-1953



After c1940 this third die has holes which are noticeably larger than before, and may well be the result of a machine refurbishment.  
Issues: Q 2d U 2½d 3d

Q = KGV *Dark Colours* 1937-1953  
U = QEII *Wildings* 1953-1968

This fourth die is only found on coil stamps from EIRE. The foot of the 'T' is different again as, although the pins are in line, they lie slightly off the horizontal.

Postmarks and dates seen so far are all from Dublin during 1938.

Die in use 1935-1940.

